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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we find joy in obeying Your commands. With all our hearts, we thank You for Your guidance that keeps us on the road of abundant living. Today, make our lawmakers instruments of Your providence, measuring up to the challenges of these momentous times. As they seek to honor Your great Name, transform their common days into transfiguring and redemptive moments. Cleanse the fountains of their hearts from all that defiles, making them fit vessels to be used for Your honor. Guide today's deliberations, debates, and decisions.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, February 27, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Sen-

ator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SCHATZ thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 309, the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion. The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 309, S. 1086, a bill to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for one hour. The majority will control the first half and the Republicans the final half.

Following morning business the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1982, the veterans benefits bill.

I filed cloture on the substitute amendment and the underlying bill. As a result the filing deadline for first-degree amendments is 10:30 this morning and for second-degree amendments it is 1:30 p.m.

At 2 p.m. there will be a series of votes in relation to the veterans bill. We also expect to consider the nomination of Michael Connor to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior today.

PROTECTING VETERANS

Mr. President, there are lots of issues on which Democrats and Republicans

will always disagree. That is OK. But, historically, Democrats and Republicans have been able to agree on one issue: Congress should do everything in its power to protect those who risk their lives to protect our country.

I had hoped this work period would be more bipartisan; that the Senate could tackle issues and would be able to stop the political games we have seen so often from the minority.

That is why I scheduled floor time for a bill to expand health care and job training for veterans of the Armed Forces—a very, very comprehensive bill, worked on by the Veterans Affairs' Committee, led by Senator SANDERS. The bill is loaded, as Senator SANDERS and I discussed yesterday in detail, with Republican provisions that he put in the bill.

Democrats and Republicans alike should be able to support this bill, which is sponsored, as I have indicated, by Senator SANDERS from Vermont.

Democrats were even willing to work with our Republican colleagues to consider relevant amendments to this legislation. So it was disappointing—but, sadly, not surprising—when Republicans almost immediately injected base partisan politics into a debate over a bill that should—should—be bipartisan, insisting on an unrelated amendment on Iran that they knew would kill the bill.

I do not know what they say to the 26 veterans groups. Millions of veterans really supported this bill and did everything they could to help the chairman of the committee, the junior Senator from Vermont, to move this bill forward. But they did it on an unrelated amendment on Iran that they knew would kill the bill. I do not know all the reasons, but we had a number of speeches, especially one from Dr. COBURN, the junior Senator from Oklahoma, who came to the floor and had questions about the bill.

I did not agree with all of his assertions, but he has a right to dispute

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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